the middle of the room, affording full access to air, atmospheric damp, and dust. The room has never been warmed, and never could have been warmed; and when I saw it in 1846, the windows were so broken as to afford the utmost facilities of ingress and egress to the birds, the consequences of which visits were very visible; but all the records are in perfect preservation, so far as the effects of time are concerned. Such as are damaged have only been so by actual violence.

5. Domesday, the earliest existing English record, is deposited in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey, in the vaulted porch, never warmed by fire. From the first deposit of Domesday volume in the Treasury, at Winchester, in the reign of the Conqueror, it certainly never felt or saw a fire, yet every page of the vellum is bright, sound, and perfect. This is equally the case with the Chirographs of Fines and Rolls of the *Curia Regis*, beginning in the reign of Henry the Second, till recently, in the same repository; and, generally speaking, every record in the Chapter House, except certain leagues, treaties, and books, which have come into actual contact with rainwater, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and certain others lying upon a neglected corner on the ground, which appear to have been damaged by the overflowing of a drain."

Mr. Braidwood, on being applied to, strongly recommended open fire-places for safety: he thought that no furnace or close fire should be permitted within any premises which are meant to be absolutely safe from fire. Sir W. Hooker, of Kew, from experience in his *Herbarium*, agrees in the opinion that in a properly prepared and situated, and properly ventilated room, the action of the external air, with its alternations of wet and dry, can have no injurious effect upon dead vegetable matter. "Dry ground, however," as he properly says, "for the building, and dry walls, are indispensable."

The floors of the new repository will be formed with wrought iron girders and flat brick arches of less than 5 feet span, laid on the top with white Suffolk tiles. The sashes and door-frames will be of metal; the doors of slate; the roof iron. The brick walls inside will be coloured, without plaster. The hall, which is entered from the south side of the building will be lined with Portland stone, and have a panelled ceiling formed in zinc, and emblazoned. Externally the walls are of Kentish rag stone, with dressings of Anston stone. It is Late Gothic in style, with something of a German character, and promises to be very successful in effect. The peculiarities of the elevation result from the construction and provisions of the building. By referring to the plans it will be seen that two windows are provided for each room, and as the rooms are 15 feet high, divided by a gallery, or iron floor, it follows that the windows must be unusually lofty to light both floors, and to throw the light 25 feet down the passages between the records: these circumstances make the front a mass of window; precluding any plain surfaces, and rendering ordinary forms and proportions inapplicable. Again, the weight to be carried, and the consequent necessity for stiffening the front wall, weakened as it would be by many and lofty windows, has induced the adoption of deep buttresses. These together, the extent of window and the adoption of deep buttresses, will produce in execution a bold effect. The structure presents the peculiarity, observable in another of Mr. Pennethorne's buildings, that there is no entrance in the principal façade.

The clock turret seen in our view, but which is over the entrance on the other side, is novel in design. It is not included in the present estimates.

Messrs. Lee, we may add, are the contractors for the building; Messrs. Grissell for the iron-work. The total cost of the part now in progress, which is expected to be ready for occupation in about twelve months from this time, will be about 40,000*l*. The walls are already up to the middle of the ground-story.

## THE EXHIBITION—A GOSSIP.*

My object is not to explain the Exhibition, even generally, but rather to make use of the Exhibition, or more correctly, some prominent works of art-manufacture contained in it, as one huge illustration of the general principles I have advocated throughout, in my lectures.

There is not one point that I have urged that is not there practically demonstrated to be of essential importance; and I think I shall be able to now clearly show you that the very first business of every designer is to make himself master of the elements of all established styles, not only for the sake of knowing these styles, but to enable him to effect any intelligible ornamental expression whatever. You must know all: to study one style only will perhaps prove more fatal to your success than to study none at all; for, in the latter case, you are open to improvement and new impressions, while in the former your mind is, as it were, a stereotype of a few fixed ideas with which you stamp your uniform mark on everything you touch; as the ignorant knights of old made their sign manual with their sword-hilts, or their thumb-nails.

We have seen "*nature*" very often sententiously held up as in antagonism to the so-called historic styles, or absolutely in antagonism to art: this is only the outrageous presumption of ignorance. I need not demonstrate to you that true art can never be the antagonist of nature.

The treasures of art are derived as legitimately, from nature's stores, for the recreation of our minds, as the grains and fruits of the earth are provided by the husbandman's skill for the nourishment of our bodies. If pure "*naturalism*" is true for the mind, I maintain it is true also for the body; yet if so, there is nothing left for us, but all to go out to grass.

However, what is nature? We hear of three kingdoms of nature,—the vegetable, the mineral, and the animal: one cannot be more natural than the other; therefore, on the score of *nature* herself, we cannot give the preference to any one in particular.

The naturalists generally have not gone to nature, but only to one small class of individuals in one of its kingdoms. Let us by all means go to nature, but with a strict impartiality, selecting our forms simply with a view to the most appropriate contrasts or combinations in accordance with the sentiment of the design we have in hand, at once repudiating, *in toto*, the notion that mere imitation can in any way compensate for an incomplete or imperfect arrangement of the parts, as prescribed already by the very sentiment or principles of the contemplated design. This brings us to another point,—how far using the elements of past times may be deprecated as a slavish repetition of ancient or mediæval art, and ignoring the wants and sentiments of the present age.

Such a result may accrue if we cannot separate old elements from old sentiments: we must, however, go very much out of our way to verify any such disaster, and certainly only by, in the first instance, adopting an old sentiment, as in the so-called mediæval court in the Exhibition. But there are, as I shall show as we proceed, very many works in the Exhibition eminently suited to the wants and sentiments of the present age, though composed as ornamental designs, entirely of old elements.

The fact of ornamental elements being established favourites of remote ages, does not make them old in a bygone sense, unless they have sprung from a sentiment that is a bygone. Many ancient and middle-age forms, if reproduced now in their genuine original character, would be at best but whimsical revivals; but beauty can never really be antiquated or old-fashioned, whatever the conventionalities of the day may be. What is inherently beautiful is for all time; and the repeated attempts at the revival of classical forms, with a steadily increasing interest on the part of the public, in spite of fashions or conventionalisms the most opposite, is at least one sure test of the inherent beauty of these forms.

It is a morbid taste to hunt after variety purely for variety's sake; and it is perfectly legitimate to preserve all that is beautiful, however we may continue to prosecute the search of the beautiful in other provinces; and there are still unexplored regions of nature left for us. It must be evident that efforts at variety, unless founded on the sincerest study of what has been already done, not by our own immediate rivals in our own time, but by all people at all times, are at most but assumed novelties; but if such really, the chances are that it is their only recommendation, as was the case with the Rococo, the novelty of which represents the exclusion of all the beauty of the past.

What is recommended by use never grows old: it is only what is fostered by fashion that will be superseded as a new fashion arises. So it is with the duration of the styles: some are characterised by mere local peculiarities or special objects, others by abstract principles. Local peculiarities, and all specialities, when their causes cease, must die out, and cannot be revived except by a revival of the cause; and so, if their causes cannot be recalled, it will be impossible to revive several of the historic styles; but where the causes of styles still exist, the styles themselves are as much of this age as of the past.

The Classical and Renaissance styles are founded on abstract principles, and therefore may and must be revived as soon as their motives are thoroughly understood; and such a restoration is not a copy of an old idea, but a genuine revival of a taste,—a very different thing from merely copying designs.

Then to apply our test to the Exhibition itself: it is generally admitted that in spite of much that is bad and indifferent, it offers, on the whole, an unprecedented display of art-manufacture. Of course, in the general review I now propose to take of this wonderful collection of the world's industry, I must limit my remarks, if I am to be at all practical, to the most prominent specimens only, or even to the mere treatment of classes of manufacture; and at present my object goes scarcely beyond an attempt to show you that all the most remarkable works there displayed owe their effect to a skilful management of the results of the labours of generations that have gone before us; from the study and mastery of past efforts, and not from any sudden impulse of genius or any intuitive adaptation of nature. All that is good is the result of the *study of ornament*, more or less universal or singular, according to the method of that study.

The Exhibition contains nothing new,—not one new element, not one new combination; and yet it represents, vast as it is, only a small proportion of the great national expressions of ornament, of past ages of the world.

And in many cases we have very much more the simple reproduction of an old idea than the veritable revival of the genuine artistic feeling of the past.

[The lecturer then proceeded to illustrate his remarks by reference to portions of the Exhibition. In Messrs. Wedgwood's stall he found a genuine revival of artistic feeling; and in

* The following is the substance of a very interesting lecture delivered by Mr. Wornum, at the Central School of Design, on the 3rd inst. We give, too, in our present number a continuation of our papers on the Building Stones in the Exhibition, and shall probably continue them, notwithstanding the close of this wondrous collection of works of industry. On Monday and Tuesday next the exhibitors and two friends each will be admitted to the building, and on Wednesday the Royal Commissioners will meet the jurors and exhibitors alone to close the Exhibition finally. We have received many letters urging that it should be kept open longer for certain excellent purposes, but have reason to believe it would be useless to print them.

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